

Message Text

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QTE:

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MU

SUBJECT: MASIRAH ISLAND

REF: DOHA 235

1. CURRENT STATE-OF-PLAY ON US ACCESS TO MASIRAH AS
FOLLOWS: FOLLOWING AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE BY SULTAN IN
EARLY JANUARY TO PERMIT OCCASIONAL US USE OF BASE, DEPART-
MENT BRIEFED UK REPRESENTATIVES. UK RESPONDED WITH FOUR
QUESTIONS ON SPECIFICS, TO WHICH US HAS NOT YET REPLIED.
BEGIN FYI, USG IS CONDUCTING THOROUGH INTERAGENCY STUDY
OF QUESTION OF LEVEL OF US INTEREST IN MASIRAH AND ITS
BROADER RAMIFICATIONS. REPLY TO BRITISH AND FURTHER US
MOVES SUSPENDED PENDING COMPLETION THIS STUDY. END FYI.

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2. SINCE STATUS OF BASE ESTABLISHED BY 1958 UK-OMANI

AGREEMENT, UK ASSUMES PLAUSIBLY THAT AGREEMENT ITSELF WILL REQUIRE MODIFICATION TO PERMIT US ACCESS TO BASE. WE UNDERSTAND OMANI POSITION IS THAT, AS BASE IS ON SOVEREIGN OMANI TERRITORY, PERMISSION FOR US ACCESS TO BASE IS MATTER OF OMANI SOVEREIGN PREROGATIVE.

3. ALTHOUGH UK POSITION HYPOTHETICALLY PERMITS UK VETO OF US PRESENCE, AND OMANI POSITION DOES NOT, USG DOES NOT

ANTICIPATE PROBLEM IN THIS REGARD. PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS SUGGEST UK WILL IN FACT AGREE TO US ACCESS. OMANI GOVERNMENT, FOR ITS PART, RECOGNIZES NEED FOR CONSULTATION WITH UK. AS PRACTICAL POLITICAL MATTER, ALL THREE PARTIES - OMAN, US, AND UK - WILL NEED TO AGREE TO NATURE OF US ACCESS.

4. REFTTEL (PARA 5) THEREFORE INACCURATE IN DISCERNMENT OF DISCREPANCY BETWEEN US AND UK VIEWS. DISCREPANCY IS BETWEEN UK AND OMANI VIEWS. USG HAS NO POSITION ON THIS QUESTION, AND PERCEIVES NO MERIT IN ADOPTING POSITION AT THIS TIME, WHICH PERFORCE WOULD HAVE TO SIDE WITH EITHER UK OR OMAN. ONLY IN CONTINGENCY THAT UK WOULD REFUSE US ACCESS TO BASE - WHICH WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE - WOULD QUESTION OF SOVEREIGN PREROGATIVE VERSUS TREATY OBLIGATIONS BECOME SIGNIFICANT TO USG OR RELEVANT TO MASIRAH QUESTION.

5. ABOVE FOR YOUR INFORMATION. WE DO NOT BELIEVE USEFUL FOR OUR EMBASSIES IN THIRD COUNTRIES TO BECOME INVOLVED IN DETAILS OF OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH HMG OR OMANIS ON MASIRAH. YOU SHOULD, OF COURSE, CONTINUE TO SEEK CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF BASIC NATURE OF OUR INTEREST, ALONG LINES OF GUIDANCE PREVIOUSLY SENT. INGERSOLL UNQTE INGERSOLL

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